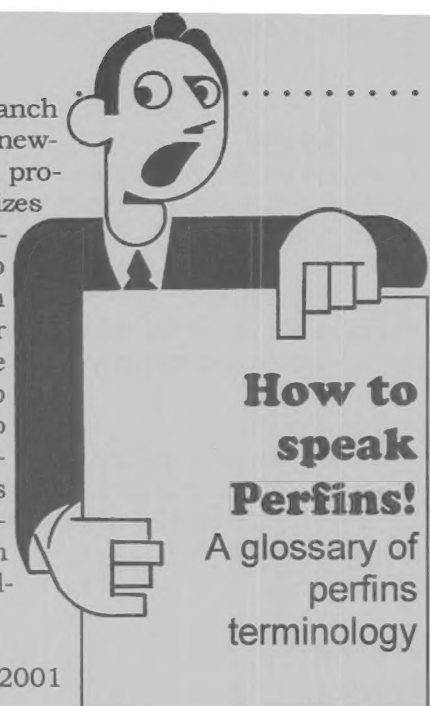


Perfins philately has its own language, just like any specialized branch of our hobby, and that language may not be totally familiar to newcomers or even to some veterans. This glossary is an attempt to provide a better understanding of that language. The author recognizes that in publishing this glossary he is opening himself to all sorts of criticism from those collectors—some with far more expertise than he—who do not concur with every definition. While the draft of the glossary was taken from several previously published sources and reviewed by several senior members of the U.S., Canadian, and British perfins clubs, the faults one may find are the sole responsibility of the author. It is also important to note that the terminology here is more applicable to U.S. collectors than to our Canadian, British, and Continental counterparts. I say this in deference to Rosemary Smith, my British counterpart, who had some chuckles over some of my definitions. In some cases, I have included similar definitions for more than one term. That's because sometimes there is more than one way to say the same thing. Finally, additions to this glossary are always solicited and will be included in future reprintings of the text.

Floyd A. Walker/July 2001



Arc



A perfin pattern in which the letters are arranged in an arc or semi-circle.

Blind perfin

The indentation made in a stamp by a pin which does not go all the way through to create a hole. Blind perfins may result from lack of pressure on the perforator mechanism or from partially broken pins—or from an attempt to perforate too many sheets of stamps at the same time. It's the same effect popularized politically in the 2000 elections by the term *pregnant chad*!

Broken pin

A pin that has broken off the die so it no longer touches the stamp when the perfin is made.

Cinderella perfin

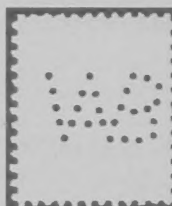


A perfin found on a private postage stamp, local post stamp, or the stamp of a Cinderella country such as Lundy or Steep Holm.

Classic perfin

Usually denotes perfins on stamps issued well before perfins came into wide use in a country: perfins on the Columbians, for example, or the small Queens of Canada.

Condensed

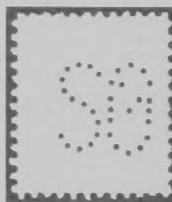


A pattern which is designed such that some of the parts of one letter are used to form part of the other letter(s)

Confirming cover

A cover bearing a perfin and a corner card or other identification that confirms the user of the perfin pattern, the period of usage, and the location(s) of the user. Also called a proving cover.

Control hole



A hole extraneous to the perfin pattern which was sometimes added as a means of identifying different perforators or, more commonly, different localities in which the perfin was to be used. Western Electric Company, Standard Oil, General Electric, and International Harvester are among the companies which used these control holes to show use at different company branches. Also called a code hole.

Damaged die

A perforator die that has broken pins. The result is incomplete perfins that may sometimes be mistaken for new or different patterns.

Dated PREPER

A precancelled perfin with an additional hand or machine overprinted date and company initials

Design Perfin



A perfin pattern which consists of a design, not made up of letters. Such designs often represent the trademarks or logos of the users.

Diagonal



A perfin pattern in which the letters are arranged in a diagonal fashion, usually reading from top to bottom, but occasionally from bottom to top.

Die

A set of pins arranged to make one complete design or set of initials.

Die plating

The attempt to reconstruct the positions of the dies within a perforating machine by studying the variations in the individual perfins produced by the different dies.

Double punch

Two or more perfins applied to the same stamp, usually as a result of a machine punching the same stamp twice before the stamp is moved out of the way.

Dumb punch

See Blind perfin

EKU

The earliest known use of a particular perfin pattern or of perfins in a particular state or country.

Endogram



A perfin pattern consisting of a letter or letters enclosed in an outside border such as a circle, shield, or star but not another letter.

Exhibition perfin

See vanity perfin.

Fakes

There are two kinds of fakes: fake perfins in genuine stamps, and genuine perfins in stamps to which a fake overprint or other mark has been applied.

Head

Another term for a die. Perforators are sometimes described in terms of the number of heads or dies they have.

Illegal perfin

An illegal perfin is one which exceeds the size or hole dimensions specified for perfins on that country's stamps.

Illegal usage

The use of a perfin by an unauthorized person, perhaps as a result of theft or in some cases, the result of perfins appearing on the collector market and being used for postage.

Incomplete perfin



A perfin that has one or more of the holes missing, sometimes as a result of a damaged perforator and sometimes because the perfin was applied so close to the edge of the stamp that the pattern does not completely appear. Also called a partial perfin.

Issue collection

A perfins collection with all face-different stamps on which that perfin appears. Some collectors include watermark, perforation, or other differences in issue collections of perfins.

Kodak perfin

A perfin, usually letters and numerals, used to code film received at a Kodak or similar processing facility. Sometimes the perfin accidentally perforated the stamps attached to the film mailing label.

LKU

The latest known use of a particular perfin pattern or of perfins in a particular state or country.

Local perfin

A perfin used on a stamp intended for local use only, as in Germany following WWI. Such stamps themselves are not widely recognized by Scott.

Mirror pair



A pair of stamps which shows the same perfin but from two different perspectives. Mirror pairs are created when adjoining stamps are folded and perforated at the same time.

Missing holes

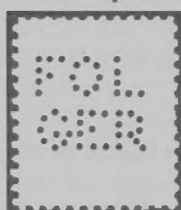
Descriptive term used to indicate that one or more pins in the original perfin have been broken and thus created perfins with some holes missing.

Monogram



A perfin pattern in the form of a company's monogram or the monogram associated with a company product.

Name perfin



A perfin pattern which spells the name of a company or a product, or the widely recognized abbreviation of a company, such as Esso or Kodak.

Official perfin

Perfin applied to regular postage stamps to convert them to official use, *i.e.*, the VG on the stamps of Victoria and the OHMS on the stamps of Canada.

Pattern

The term used to describe a particular perfin, *i.e.*, perfin pattern.

Perfin type

A perfin which differs substantially from other perfins as opposed to a variety (see perfin variety below).

Perfin variety

A perfin with a minor difference which distinguishes it from a similar perfin. Perfin varieties may result from minor differences between dies in a multiple-die perforator or from broken dies (such as a period missing) on a single die machine.

Perfin/Perfins

Coined from the words perforated insignia, perfins are stamps perforated with a series of holes in the shape of a design or initials. Perfins is sometimes used in the singular as perfin. Some purists suggest that the term perfin refers to the stamp in which the perforated insignia appears, while perforated insignia refers only to the perfins pattern itself.

Perforator

A hand- or electrically-operated machine with perforating pins used to perforate initials or designs in postage stamps.

Personal perfin

See vanity perfin.

Philatelic perfin

A perfin pattern used to promote a philatelic event. The ELPEX and ARIPEX patterns on U.S. stamps are examples of this kind of perfin.

Pin

A flat-ended metal needle that punches one hole in a stamp.

POKO

A term used to describe a class of perfins on coil stamps that were fed through machines that automatically affixed them to letters. POKO perfins are found on the stamps of several European countries.

Position

The position the perfin occupies in relationship to the face of the stamp. There are eight recognized perfin positions. In each case the perfin pattern is seen reading correctly. **Position 1** is the perfin pattern reading correctly when the stamp is face up, head up. **Position 2** is the perfin pattern reading correctly with the stamp face up on its right side. **Position 3** is the perfin pattern reading correctly with the stamp face up, head down. **Position 4** is the perfin pattern reading correctly with the stamp face up on its left side. **Positions 5, 6, 7, and 8** have the stamp in exactly the same position but face down; that is, the pattern reads correctly from the back of the stamp. To most perfin collectors, the preferable patterns are either **Position 1** or **Position 5**, although if one prefers the perfin to read correctly from the back of the stamp, the relative position to the face of the stamp becomes somewhat immaterial.

Position collection

A perfins collection of all eight possible positions for every stamp possible with the same perfin type.

PREPER

A perfin bearing a precancel. Collecting PREPERS is a fascinating specialty within both precancel and perfins collecting.

Private perfin

Sometimes used to indicate a perfin pattern used by a business or commercial establishment as opposed to a governmental or official agency.

Proving cover

See Confirming Cover

Railroad perfin

A perfin used by a railroad or a firm associated with the railroad industry. Railroad perfins are the most widely collected specialty within perfins collecting.

Random hole

An hole extraneous to the design of a perfin—but not intended to serve as a control or code hole. Such holes may be the result of an accidental partial perfin or some other random event.

Rating

An alpha or numeric code for indicating the relative scarcity of a perfin pattern. The U.S. perfins rating system was created by Claude W. Cain in the 1960s and has been modified several times as additional information has become available. A discussion of the rating system for U.S. stamps is found in the introduction to the *U. S. Perfins Catalog* published in 1998.

Repaired perfin

A perfin which has been modified or restored by completing an incompletely punched hole or adding a missing control hole.

Revenue perfin

Perfins appear on revenue stamps in two forms: as canceling or dating devices to show the use of the stamp, and as security endorsements to prevent the unauthorized use of the revenue stamps. Some postage stamps have been converted to revenue use through the application of perfin endorsements or cancels.

Schermack



A perfin pattern created by vending machines design to automatically apply stamps to covers. The term is generic and applies to any such pattern found on U.S. vending machine stamps regardless of their manufacturer.

Security endorsements

A generic term used to describe overprints, perfins, underprints, punches, or other markings designed to keep postage stamps from being used by unauthorized individuals.

Specimen perfin

The word SPECIMEN perforated into a stamp by the printer to mark stamps not valid for postage but to be used for training or proofing purposes.

SPIF

Acronym for Stamps Perforated with the Initials of Firms. An early (British) term for perfins.

Split

A perfin pattern that appears in two parts on either side of a stamp, it results from sloppy application of the perfin at the edge of the stamp rather than in the center.

Topical perfins

Perfins related to a specific subject such as those appearing on stamps picturing Einstein, or perfin patterns related to a particular industry such as insurance or banking.

Type collection

A perfins collection with one example of each perfin type.

Vanity perfin

A perfin pattern used to mark a collector's personal postage rather than to prevent unauthorized use of the stamp. Vanity perfins are also sometimes created for stamp exhibitions or special events.

Word perfin



A perfin pattern which spells a complete English (or foreign) word, as distinguished from a name perfin which spells the name of a product or company. WE, the perfin of the Western Electric Company is ONE example.